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ARTICLES:

- (1) How to use personnel network hold the key to new LDP President Abe's policy of attaching importance to growth; Selection of central command drawing attention

YOMIURI (Page 9) (Full)
September 21, 2006

Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe, who was yesterday elected the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) new president, has stressed his intention to accelerate the Koizumi Cabinet's structural reform line, as well

as to surmount such challenges as the declining birthrate, rapid aging of society and globalization through enhanced productivity of the Japanese economy. Prime Minister Koizumi has promoted structural reforms by installing private citizens into key posts, such as the appointment of Heizo Takenaka, a former college professor, as minister of internal affairs and communications. Abe is advocating a policy of placing emphasis on economic growth. How he will use his personnel network in business circles will likely hold the key to his economic and fiscal management.

Technical innovation

The keyword in Abe's economic policy lexicon is "technological innovation." During a press conference held after his election to the LDP presidency, Abe indicated his intention to look into the possibility of introducing a tax system that encourages investment in information technology (IT) or nanotechnology areas.

Many business leaders are hailing Abe's policy of attaching importance to economic growth. Fujio Mitarai, chairman of the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), plans to make an "innovate Japan" proposal in its future initiative to be compiled possibly by next January. His view coincides with that of Abe. Mitarai is believed certain to be picked as a private-sector member of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy (CEFP).

Among Abe's personnel network in business circles is Jiro Ushio, chairman of Ushio Electricity, who is currently serving as a private-sector member of the CEFP. Ushio's eldest daughter is married to the elder brother of Abe. A senior official of an economy-related government agency noted, "Educational reform advocated by Mr. Abe is very similar to Mr. Ushio's pet argument."

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Chances are that Ushio, who is well versed in the management and policy of global companies, could be picked as Abe's mentor.

Abe is attending the Four Seasons Group, a study group launched in 2002 by State Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Kaoru Yosano and JR Tokai President Yoshiyuki Kasai, at the invitation of Yosano.

Kasai is also a member of the Study Council on Overseas Economic Cooperation, a private advisory organ reporting to the chief cabinet secretary, whose members Abe picked. Kasai has thus an understanding

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with Abe. The Four Seasons Council meets four times a year even now. The panel members have also association with Takashi Nishioka, chairman of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

Absence of advisors?

Who will serve as a central command, a role Takenaka fulfilled in the Koizumi Cabinet, will draw attention in the later stage of personnel selection.

Prime Minister Koizumi appointed Takenaka to head the CEFP and pressed ahead with the reform effort to move services from government to the private sector in cooperation with private-sector members, including Hiroshi Okuda, then chairman of Nippon Keidanren.

Abe has also characterized the panel as an extremely important venue in setting basic policy for budget compilation. However, a number of sources noted, "At present, there are no specific economic advisors," as the same senior official at an economic ministry put it.

Some see that economic policy proposed by Abe is no more than the government's new economic growth strategy or basic policy guidelines on economic and fiscal management and structural reforms, testimony to the absence of economic advisors.

What is worthy of attention is to what extent Abe can place his imprint on the structural reform policy promoted by Prime Minister

Koizumi and Takenaka.

It is said that the Koizumi reform initiative has created an economic divide in society. As a main feature of his campaign pledge, Abe advocated supporting those who failed in business with second chances, noting, "We must not let losers remain losers."

However, some take the view that Abe's stance of constraining the Bank of Japan's zero interest rate policy and giving priority to economic growth is similar to that of Takenaka. The focus for the moment is on the selection of key economic ministers, such as an economy, trade and industry minister and a finance minister, and a chairman of the LDP Policy Research Council.

(2) "Abe is a nationalist," says US university professor Curtis

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
September 21, 2006

Gerald Curtis, a professor at Columbia University in the US whose works include, "The rise and fall of Nagata-cho politics," yesterday gave a speech at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan on Shinzo Abe, who has just been elected the new Liberal Democratic Party

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president.

He pointed out the danger of Abe fundamentally changing postwar Japan's pacifist policies, noting that if a comparison is made between Abe and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the foundation of their support, that of Koizumi comes from his popularity with the public, while Abe's support comes from nationalists.

Curtis said, that "there are no problems now in US-Japan relations," but he underscored, "The only issue for the US is Japan-China relations." He noted, "China will try to repair relations with Japan as soon as the Koizumi administration ends," but he cautioned that Abe's stance of not clarifying whether he had visited Yasukuni Shrine or not (this April) is a dangerous position to take since "it tells China that foreign pressure (against Japan justifying its aggressive war and that he intends to do whatever he pleases."

Curtis stressed that Abe's economic policy "have no important content." He also criticized the education voucher system Abe advocates: "Why is he insisting on the worst aspects of US policy (i.e., market principles)?"

"Personally, I hope Mr. Abe will do his utmost to correct the economic divide and maintain the universal health insurance coverage system," he said.

(3) Abe considering having senior vice ministers serve also in key LDP posts, strengthening the role of chief cabinet secretary

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
September 20, 2006

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, who is certain to become the next prime minister, is now looking into the possibility of having senior vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries serve also as division chiefs (bukaichou) in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Research Council as a means of running the government under the lead of the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei. Abe's aim is to centralize control under the Kantei by creating a policy-making system shared by the government and ruling coalition parties. He wants the political administration to emerge from the tendency of depending on the bureaucracy. Having determined that the role of chief cabinet secretary, a key cabinet post, is vital for allowing the Kantei to take the lead. He also is mulling the possibility of reducing the chief cabinet secretary's administrative work as much as possible, as well as of creating a system under which the chief cabinet secretary will be able to concentrate on coordination of important policy issues.

The LDP's National Vision Project Team submitted to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2002 a report proposing that senior vice

ministers and parliamentary secretaries concurrently serve in important posts of the LDP Policy Research Council. However, the Koizumi government failed to implement the proposal, and it has carried it over to the next government.

In a debate in Tokyo on Sept. 15, Abe clarified that he would appoint only those who hold basic policy stances similar to his to serve on his cabinet and in senior vice ministerships. He said that he would like the government and ruling camp to work as one by having the senior vice ministers serve also as division chiefs in the LDP Policy Research Council. Koizumi used the standoff between the opposition and the ruling coalition as a driving force to

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implement policies. Abe is, however, trying to strengthen his power by winning the LDP over to his side.

If a multilayered setup is formed, the role of chief cabinet secretary, coordinator in the government, will become significant.

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The Cabinet Law stipulates that the job of chief cabinet secretary is to plan, draft, and comprehensively coordinate basic policies on key issues of the cabinet. Therefore, the new government seems to be placing importance on this basic line.

The chief cabinet secretary is in charge of a wide range of administrative duties, including awards and decorations, public relations, the preservation of government documents, measures to secure intelligence, disposal of abandoned chemical weapons, and urban redevelopment. The chief cabinet secretary also has to reply many questions at the Diet. Abe attended 77 days of the 150-day committee sessions during last ordinary Diet session. Therefore, Abe aims to reduce the chief cabinet secretary's administrative works.

Specifically, other cabinet ministers and five prime ministerial assistants to be appointed would handle such duties as disposal of abandoned chemical weapons and urban development. Another issue up for consideration is to reduce the press conference that is now given twice a day by having the cabinet public relations secretary speak to the press.

(4) Profile of LDP President Shinzo Abe

MAINICHI (Page 12) (Full)
September 21, 2006

Name: Shinzo Abe
Sex: Male
Birth date: September 21, 1954
Age: 52
Address: Tomigaya, Shibuya Ward, Tokyo
Hometown: Nagato City (formally called Yuya Town), Yamaguchi Prefecture
Academic record:
Political Science Department, Law Faculty,
Seikei University
Political party:
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)
Constituency: Yamaguchi No. 4 constituency

Number of times elected to the Lower House:
Five times

He is allowed to run in both the proportional representation segment and a single-seat constituency.

The reason he decided to run in the LDP presidential election:

I pledge to do my best to take over the flame of reform, to make Japan a country with vitality that would provide a second chance to business failures, to make Japan a country open to the world, to make Japan a beautiful country which our children would be proud of.

Book: Toward a Beautiful Country

Joint works: Conservative Revolution,
Declaration

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Determination to Protect This Country
Shinzo Abe: Series of Interviews

Hobbies: Enjoy watching movies, reading books,
playing golf
Belonged to the university's archery club

Motto: Never forget the ideals with which
you started out.
(Words by Noh actor Zeami)
To live with utmost sincerity (by Confucius)

Favorite books:
Yo ni Sumu Hibi (Ryotaro Shiba)
Ryukonroku (Kaoru Furukawa)

Person he respects:
Yoshida Shoin (Edo period)

Favorite foods:
Grilled beef, Chinese noodles, watermelon
Ice cream ("PuPu" made by Napoli Ice Cream Co.)

Foods he dislikes:
Raw oysters
Drinks no alcoholic beverages

Favorite personality:
Hikaru Nishida

Song he sings at karaoke bars:
Omoide no Nagisa (by The Wild Ones)

He is 175 centimeters tall and weighs 70 kilograms. His blood type
is B.

He lives with his wife Akie and his mother Yoko. He has a miniature
dachshund.

(5) Poll: 45 percent weigh China, South Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)
September 17, 2006

The Japan Polling Organization conducted a face-to-face nationwide
public opinion survey on Sept. 9-10 to probe into public attitudes
on foreign relations. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will now step
down late this month, with his successor coming into office shortly
thereafter. In the survey, respondents were asked about the
post-Koizumi cabinet's diplomatic stance. In response to this
question, 45 percent said the next prime minister should prioritize
improving Japan's relations with Asia, including China and South
Korea, and 20 percent said Japan should further prioritize its
alliance with the United States. As seen from these figures, the
survey resulted in urging the next premier to reconstruct Japan's
Asia diplomacy confused with Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

When asked about Japan's relations with China, a total of 80 percent
gave negative impressions, broken down into 23 percent saying "bad"
and 57 percent saying "bad to a certain extent." In response to a
question asking about Japan's relations with South Korea, negative
impressions totaled 67 percent.

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Respondents were also asked if they were feeling a threat from North
Korea, which fired seven ballistic missiles in July. In response, a
total of 84 percent said "yes," broken down into 38 percent saying
"very much so" and 46 percent saying "somewhat."

When asked about Japan's future defenses, 27 percent said Japan should further strengthen its readiness to shoot down missiles, with 26 percent saying Japan should also acquire the capability of striking enemy bases within the scope of its self-defense rights to be invoked. As seen from these figures, a total of 53 percent answered that Japan should further reinforce its defensive preparedness. Among other answers, 32 percent said Japan should prioritize diplomatic efforts instead of building up its defenses," with 12 percent saying Japan may stay at the present level of defenses.

Asked if Japan should expedite its negotiations with North Korea for diplomatic normalization, 53 percent said "yes," with 42 percent saying "no."

Respondents were further asked if Japan should have a permanent law so that Japan can send Self-Defense Forces personnel overseas whenever necessary. In response to this question, affirmative answers totaled 46 percent, broken down into 17 percent saying "yes" and 29 percent saying "yes to a certain degree." Negative answers totaled 49 percent. As seen from these figures, public opinion was split over the permanent legislation.

(Note) Figures rounded off.

Polling methodology: For the survey, a total of 3,000 persons were sampled out of males and females aged 20 and over at 250 locations throughout the country on a stratified two-stage random-sampling basis, so as to epitomize the nation's voting population of more than a 100 million. The survey was conducted over a period of two days, Sept. 9-10, on a face-to-face interview basis. Answers were obtained from 1,742 persons, excluding those who could not be interviewed because of their having moved away or being on a trip, or for other reasons. The retrieval rate was 58.1 percent. In the breakdown of respondents, males accounted for 49.1 percent, and females 50.9 percent.

(6) Japan takes step toward becoming a "nuclear export country," with IAEA fuel-supply registration proposal

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Slightly abridged)
September 20, 2006

Japan as the only nation that suffered from atomic bombings would start exporting nuclear technology in an effort to prevent nuclear proliferation. This "paradox" is gradually taking on a realistic touch as Japan, a country noted for its sophisticated nuclear power technology, has decided to fully participate in a new strategy worked out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to "prevent nuclear proliferation with nuclear technology" in the face of North Korea and Iran pushing ahead with nuclear weapons development programs.

Concept

In the IAEA's convention in Vienna starting on Sept. 18 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the agency's establishment State Minister in Charge of Science and Technology Policy Iwao Matsuda

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read out from a draft written in English of a report on "an IAEA fuel-supply registration system," Japan's new proposal for nuclear nonproliferation. At that moment, Japan took a first step forward toward becoming an exporter of nuclear fuel and nuclear-related technology in the near future.

IAEA Director General El Baradei initially proposed a plan to place nuclear fuel for atomic power generation under international control. But under the current situation in which there are countries engaged in nuclear development programs, it is impossible to prevent a spread of technology convertible to weapons only by inspection activities. Keeping this in mind, some countries came up with a proposal in which nuclear technology powers would guarantee nuclear fuel supplies to countries that give up their independent nuclear development.

This June, the six nuclear exporting countries, including the United States and Russia, submitted the supply-guarantee proposal. They decided to hold a general meeting in Vienna to launch a full-scale discussion on this plan.

Countermeasures

Japan, itself having top-level nuclear technology, blocked the six-nation proposal, fearing that only those countries would be allowed to export nuclear fuel.

Under the Japan-proposed IAEA fuel-supply registration system, nuclear technology powers would register the technology they wished to provide, and IAEA would then distribute it according to need. IAEA member countries would be allowed to take part in the registration system, and the way would be paved for Japan to export nuclear fuel in the future.

Nuclear Energy Council Chairman Shunsuke Kondo plans to explain Japan's proposal at special IAEA meeting. Prior to it, Kondo held a press conference on Sept. 18 and said that Japan's exports of fuel and related technology is "conceivable as a future possibility." "There also might be emergency supplying, besides constant exports," he added.

Market

Japan's concept of exporting nuclear-related technology did not emerge suddenly. In February 2004, the Japanese Nuclear Energy Industrial Conference (then) composed of nuclear power companies submitted a report that called for measures to revive the nuclear power industry, including exports. The panel also compiled a set of guidelines on atomic power in October 2005, which noted: "An introduction and expansion of atomic power plants by countries will lead to easing international competition over fossil fuel and to combating global warming. In this sense it is significant for the technology fostered by the Japanese nuclear power industry to be distributed to the world."

Japan's eagerness about nuclear-fuel exports reflects growing demand of energy demand mainly in Asia. It is inevitable that more atomic power will be needed as energy in place of oil, the price of which has skyrocketed. In actuality, plans to construct power plants are afoot in Indonesia and Vietnam. Japan does not want to be left behind in the global nuclear power market.

(7) Responsibility of Japan that supported the US; Situation in Iraq

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deteriorating

ASAHI (Page 15) (Full)
September 21, 2006

The Ground Self-Defense Force has withdrawn from the southern Iraqi city of Samawah after completing the two-and-a half years of its mission there. Incurring no casualties in the GSDF personnel, the Iraq mission is regarded as a success in Japan. But in Iraq, US-led reconstruction efforts are facing difficulty and the security situation has worsened. Japan supported America's decision to go to war with Iraq and its Iraq policy by sending SDF troops there. But America's Iraq policy is being criticized at home and abroad. How Japan should make contributions must be reexamined.

By senior writer Yasunori Kawakami, Samawah

Law and order broke down, death tolls grow three-fold

"Japanese companies will come after the SDF troops." People in Samawah still voice their hope for Japan's assistance in the wake of the SDF withdrawal. Mayor al-Jaberi (?) of Hadar in southern Iraq said: "Japan has recovered from WWII devastation. I am certain that experience can be utilized in Iraq."

But in truth, the GSDF's activities were limited to small-scale

emergency support, such as repairing schools and roads and aiding hospitals. High hopes for Japan resulted in support for the SDF.

"I am glad that the mission has been accomplished successfully without one bullet having been fired and not one person injured," Prime Minister Koizumi praised the returned GSDF troops during a flag-returning ceremony.

No GSDF personnel were injured largely because Muthannna Province, where the GSDF troops were based, was a predominantly Shiite area that successfully blocked entries by Sunni militants, who repeatedly attacked US forces.

A person connected with an armed Sunni group said to me, "We don't target at Japanese troops because they haven't hurt any Iraqis."

The logic of retribution is still alive in the Arab world. Behind continued attacks on US forces in Iraq lies a chain of retributions for America's war on terror causing collateral damage against ordinary civilians.

"Noncombatant" SDF troops were protected by the pacifist constitution banning the use of force. If they had been in battle position, Samawah would not have been a "non-combat zone."

SDF troops were deployed to Samawah on an extension of the Japan-US alliance. They played only a minor role in the extremely difficult efforts to rebuild Iraq.

The SDF's flag-returning ceremony began with Prime Minister Koizumi's speech that went: "You have accomplished the difficult mission very well under the extremely condition where temperatures could fluctuate between 50 degrees Celsius and below zero." There is no other national leader who speaks of difficulties in Iraq as if civil engineering had been conducted.

In a report presented to the Security Council on Sept. 11, UN

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Secretary General Kofi Annan said: "Iraq is one of the most violent

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conflict areas in the world. Iraqi government figures show that an average of 100 civilians die everyday in Iraq. If current patterns persist, the country faces the prospect of civil war."

According to Iraq Body Count, a Western civic group tallying civilian death tolls since the opening of the Iraq war, at least 43,000 people died as of August 31. The number of deaths in the six months since in May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq was about 3,200. Between February this year and the end of August, the number increased three-fold to 9,500. Law and order have broken down.

Criticism of Bush expanding in US

In Baghdad recently, tortured bodies with bullet holes in the head have been found daily. They show signs of "ethnic and religious cleansing" resulting from conflicts between different groups, as Shiite and Sunni groups. Reuters reported that 60 bodies had been found on Sept. 13, 32 bodies on Sept. 14, 50 bodies on Sept. 15, 47 bodies on Sept. 16, 24 bodies on Sept. 17.

Upon winding up his Middle Eastern trip, Annan held a press conference on Sept. 13 in which he said: "Most leaders I met indicated that the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath were a total disaster. They also think the region has become destabilized." Speaking for Middle Eastern leaders, Annan concluded, "The United States can neither stay in Iraq nor withdraw from there," while criticizing America's Iraq policy.

The Bush administration is under growing criticism in the US, as well. According to the New York Times in late August, 53 percent of respondents in an opinion survey said the Iraq war was a mistake and 62 percent said the situation in Iraq was not good.

In a speech on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, President Bush linked the war with the al-Qaeda terrorist network to the US military presence in Iraq, saying, "The safety of America depends on the outcome of the battle in the streets of Baghdad. If we yield Iraq to men like bin Laden, they will gain a new safe haven. They will use Iraq's resources to fuel their extremist movement. America will stay in the fight."

The United States, which has toppled Saddam Hussein's regime, is destined to fight with al-Qaeda over Iraq someday.

The Bush administration cited cooperative relations between the Saddam regime and al-Qaeda as a reason for going to war with Iraq. But earlier this month, the US Senate Intelligence Committee produced a report denying cooperative ties between the two.

It was the United States itself that has invited al-Qaeda to Iraq. That can be explained by two factors:

(1) The military presence of the United States that waged a war on Iraq has drawn fierce fire from the Islamic world, prompting extremists to fight a "holy war" against the United States.

(2) Because the US has destroyed the old regime without any postwar vision, the civil administration and law and order have been thrown into turmoil, and ethnic and religious conflicts have erupted.

Iraq looks similar to failed states, such as Afghanistan and Somalia

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that became bases of al-Qaeda in the 1990s.

Weight should be shifted to UN-led system

Before going to war with Iraq, US conservatives voiced opposition to sending troops to Iraq, fearing a possible outcry from the Islamic world and tremendous difficulty in postwar reconstruction efforts. The permanent members of the UN Security also split. Of the five permanent members, France, Russia, and China opposed the war. Germany also objected to it.

Against all odds, Japan supported the US decision. In a press conference to announce the government's decision to pull the SDF out of Iraq, Prime Minister Koizumi was asked his view on the Iraq war. In response, he said: "It is Japan's policy to cooperate with the international community, recognizing the importance of the Japan-US alliance. Based on that policy, Japan has extended assistance to Iraq." The preamble to the Constitution of Japan reads: "We are resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government." Iraq is experiencing the "horrors of war." US Congress also concluded that Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction - another reason America went to war with that country -- "groundless." The Iraq war clearly lacks justification. Despite that, the Japanese government does not seem regrettable or review its policy.

Troops of Spain and Italy that had supported the Iraq war along with Japan came under major terrorist attacks after the war's end. People raised questions about the significance of sending troops to Iraq that cost the two countries heavily, and the administrations of the two countries have been replaced through elections.

In Japan, Iraq policy did not make a campaign issue in the general election last fall. The government and the general public's awareness of the Iraq war has been low, given the SDF's unique mission that did not require the Japanese troops to fire even a single bullet.

Iraq is now at a critical conjecture, and Japan's responsibility is being questioned. In dealing with Iraq, the Koizumi administration put the Japan-US alliance ahead of cooperation with the United Nations. The Iraqi situation is deadlocked due to the unilateralism of the Bush administration. To break the impasse, there is no other way but to shift weight back from the US-led framework to the UN-led system in reconstructing and building peace in Iraq.

US and UK forced played central roles in coalition forces in the war in Iraq. Postwar reconstruction projects are being criticized and attacked as being led by US corporations. In fact, such permanent UNSC members as China, Russia, and France have left those projects, and Arab nations have been avoiding joining them, as well.

Even if Japan proposes strengthening the UN role, the UN would be a target of attacks as an organ to complement the United States. That is because Iraq would remain in chaos, as the war that was started by the US would continue. To restore normalcy, there is no other way but to begin bridging fissures in the international community that resulted from the Iraq war through the United Nations.

Immediately pulling US forces out of Iraq is not a prismatic approach to avoiding civil war and restoring law and order. It is essential to create a new UN-led peace implementation force joined by China, Russia, and France.

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Toward the Arab world, Japan has maintained its image as a nation that has successfully risen from ruins after the war and as a peaceful nation different from the US and the UK. In order to meet Samawah citizens' expectations for continued reconstruction assistance, Japan should search for new diplomatic bedrock centering on the United Nations.

SCHIEFFER